

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

UNCLAS STATE 257524

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, YO (WATKINS, CHARLES)

SUBJECT: ALLEGED SEIZURE OF PASSPORT OF U.S. CITIZEN

1. DEPARTMENT HAS RECEIVED SEPARATE INQUIRIES FROM SENATORS JAVITS AND MANSFIELD REQUESTING APPROPRIATE ASSISTANCE FOR CHARLES WATKINS, U.S. CITIZEN WHO CLAIMS HE IS UNABLE TO DEPART YUGOSLAVIA BECAUSE YUGOSLAV AUTHORITIES HAVE SEIZED AND RETAINED HIS U.S. PASSPORT. IDENTICAL LETTERS FROM WATKINS TO JAVITS AND MANSFIELD ARE DEPARTMENT'S SOLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION AT PRESENT.

2. WATKINS STATES THAT HE AND HIS AMERICAN-BORN SON (AGE 13) AND YUGOSLAV-BORN WIFE TRAVELED TO YUGOSLAVIA IN FALL OF 1973 TO ENABLE WIFE TO INITIATE LEGAL ACTION TO OBTAIN AN INHERITANCE. WATKINS REPORTEDLY OBTAINED A YUGOSLAV VISA VALID FOR ONE YEAR WHICH REQUIRED RENEWAL EVERY THREE MONTHS. HE HAD NO RPT NO TROUBLE RENEWING VISA UNTIL JULY 3, 1974 WHEN YUGOSLAV AUTHORITIES ALLEGEDLY
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SEIZED HIS PASSPORT. ALTHOUGH VALIDITY OF HIS YUGOSLAV

VISA EXPIRED OCTOBER 5, 1974, WATKINS AND SON (WHO IS INCLUDED IN FATHER'S PASSPORT) HAVE NOT RPT NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO DEPART YUGOSLAVIA.

3. WATKINS CLAIMS HE WROTE EMBASSY BELGRADE ABOUT HIS

DIFFICULTIES AND WAS ADVISED TO OBTAIN A LAWYER. HE STATES HE HAS NO RPT NO MONEY AND IS NOT PERMITTED TO LEAVE SUBOTICA.

4. EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO ASCERTAIN THE FACTS IN THIS CASE AND FURNISH APPROPRIATE ASSISTANCE. WATKINS WROTE BOTH SENATORS FROM SUBOTICA, LISTING HIS ADDRESS AS VASE STAJICA 23, SUBOTICA, YUGOSLAVIA. IN EVENT OF UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES, EMBASSY SHOULD REPORT TO DEPARTMENT BEFORE TAKING ACTION. INGERSOLL

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